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REVISED

June 5, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

STATUS REPORT ON THE CHILD CARE POLICY FRAMEWORK

This is the first status report on the Child Care Policy Framework adopted by your Board on January 6, 2009. During the first two years, status reports are to be submitted to your Board every six months.

Summary of Accomplishments, January 2009 – June, 2009

- Collaboration with the Department of Children and Families (DCFS) has allowed the Office of Child Care (OCC) to offer 18 additional training sessions for child care center staff and family child care providers between April 15, 2009 and June 30, 2009.
- Strategies for accessing child care and development services have been presented to the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Projects (PIDP) and to the First 5 LA Partners in Prevention agencies. Materials have been developed and follow-up training on the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List has been provided to PIDP agencies.
- Rather than recommending new legislation to address the chronic under-spending by child development programs holding California Department of Education (CDE) contracts, OCC will monitor two efforts undertaken by CDE to address this issue.
- The State Budget crisis had delayed, but not derailed, two objectives.
 - A committee has recently been established to explore how to effectively communicate the importance of early brain development and high quality child development services to clients of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). The Committee includes

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representatives of First 5 LA, the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, DPSS, selected child care resource and referral agencies, and OCC.

- Convening representatives of First 5 LA, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), local funders and County departments has been delayed until there is some certainty on the State Budget for 2009-2010. The purpose of this meeting will be to develop strategies to effectively outreach to low-income families and facilitate their children's enrollment in child development services.

A more detailed discussion of these items is contained in the attachment.

Challenges Encountered

The State Budget crisis and its impact on services is consuming the attention of service providers in Los Angeles County and throughout California. The threats to services are unprecedented. Given this climate, it is extremely difficult to engage stakeholders in planning or collaborative approaches to service delivery.

Focus for July 2009 – December 2009

At this time, OCC intends to:

- Monitor State Budget decisions and implementation of Federal Stimulus funds aimed at child care and development services.
- Monitor the local impact of State procedures aimed at maximizing CDE contracts for child care and development services.
- Continue to support the Information Campaign Committee involving representatives of First 5 LA, DPSS and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.
- Establish procedures to capture baseline data on child care utilization for clients of DCFS and DPSS.
- Once the State Budget is finalized, OCC will convene representatives of First 5 LA, LAUP, LACOE, County departments and other funders to discuss strategies to facilitate outreach to low-income families and facilitate the enrollment of their children in child care and development services.

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Conclusion

During the first six months, incremental progress has been made toward accomplishing the goals of the Child Care Policy Framework. This progress is due to stakeholder commitment, diligence on the part of OCC, and leadership from the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

Should you have any questions regarding these accomplishments or the focus for the coming months, please let me know or your staff may contact Kathleen Malaske-Samu at (213) 974-2440, or via e-mail at kmalaske@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel

Child Care Policy Framework

Discussion of First Quarter Accomplishments

This report is organized by the first three goals of the Policy Framework. Because the fourth goal calls for updating the Policy Framework every two years, it is not addressed in this report.

Goal I: Mobilize County departments and stakeholders to incorporate access to high quality child care and development services aimed at: 1) preventing child abuse and neglect; 2) supporting family self sufficiency; and 3) promoting school and life success.

1) Objectives Related to Clients of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

- In an effort to build a cadre of well trained child care workers, DCFS and the Office of Child Care are co-sponsoring 18 training sessions for child care center staff and family child care providers. The topics being addressed include:
 - Creating a High Quality Learning Environment 8 sessions
(These trainings are tailored to address child development centers, infant/toddler programs, and family child care homes.)
 - Building Positive Relationships with Children 2 sessions
 - Identifying Developmental Delays 4 sessions
 - Implementing an Infant/Toddler Curriculum 5 sessions

These training sessions will be completed by June 30, 2009. Implementation of this ambitious training agenda was delayed while State Budget reductions were decided for the current fiscal year. However, DCFS and the Office of Child Care are considering a similar collaboration for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year.

- Resource materials have been developed and distributed to the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Projects (PIDP) lead agencies. These materials identify the child care resource and referral agencies associated with each of the PIDP communities, and address how to access subsidized child care services using the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL).
- Presentations were made to PIDP and to agencies participating in the First 5 LA Partners in Prevention project, on how to link eligible families to subsidized child care. These presentations stressed the importance of using a case management approach even after families are registered on the LACEL. Because funding for subsidized child care is capped, even children who are at risk for abuse and neglect have to wait for a vacancy to become available in a subsidized child care and development program. So often, by the time a program is able to enroll a family, the family's contact information is out of date and they cannot be reached.
- The Office of Child Care has responded to PIDP agency requests for intensive training on how to use the LACEL.

2) Objectives Related to Clients of the Department of Public Social Services

This objective calls for developing a communication strategy to inform DPSS clients, including but not limited to CalWORKs participants, of the importance of early brain development and how high quality child care and development services support optimum brain development.

First 5 LA was viewed as a key stakeholder to accomplish this objective. Action was delayed due to the Governor's proposal to significantly reduce funding to all First 5 Commissions. Now that First 5 funding is once again secure, a Committee has been formed, including the Public Relations team from First 5 LA, to address the issue of early brain development.

3) Objectives Related to County Employees

Two reports on the County employee child care and development centers have been completed. The first report examines capacity, enrollment, and fees at the eleven employee centers. The second report addresses issues related to quality, access and affordability. The final report, to be completed by June 30, 2009, will make recommendations related to the economic viability of these and future centers.

Goal II: Advance public policies at all levels of government, local, State and Federal, which ensure that children and their parents receive the child care and development and family support services needed to build strong foundations for healthy, productive lives. Identify opportunities for Los Angeles County to promote collaboration among service providers and advocates on behalf of needed legislative or regulatory changes.

1) Local child care and development program operators, policy experts, County department representatives and Roundtable members were convened on November 6, 2008 to discuss policies which impede the full utilization of California Department of Education (CDE) child development contracts. At that time, it was noted that two actions were underway at the State level which will impact child development contracts:

- Assembly Bill 2759, by Assembly Member Dave Jones, was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on September 26, 2008 and will become effective on July 1, 2009. This bill will consolidate five center-based programs (State Preschool, Full-Day State Preschool, Pre-kindergarten and Family Literacy Part-Day and Full-Day, and Center Based Program) under the new California State Preschool Program (CSPP), making it possible for CSPP contractors to provide both full and part-day services to children who are three and four years of age. The group agreed that this new flexibility may facilitate programs to maximize their contracts.
- 2008-09 Budget Trailer Bill language directed CDE to promote the full utilization of child care and development funds by arranging interagency adjustments between contractors with the same type of contracts, when both agencies agree to a temporary transfer of funds for the balance of a fiscal year. Since November, CDE has worked with local child care planning councils throughout the State to develop a process whereby these voluntary transfers could be made. This process is expected to become effective July 1, 2009.

Participants agreed that the impact of these two statewide efforts to address chronic under-spending by child development contractors should be monitored to determine their impact, prior to proposing new legislation on this issue. As a result no new legislation was proposed to Intergovernmental Affairs on the issue of maximizing CDE child development contracts.

2) The Office of Child Care and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care have generated stakeholder support for removing the sunset language from the Education Code, thereby allowing Los Angeles County to continue serving a broader population in its Child Care Salary/Retention/Incentive Program. As a result of legislation adopted in 2005, participation in the Los Angeles County Investing in Early Educators program was open to persons working in CDE-contracted child development centers and to persons working in family child care home education networks, and family child care homes and centers serving a majority of subsidized children. Language to accomplish this intent will be included in the 2009-2010 Budget Trailer Bill.

Goal III: Facilitate the capacity of child care and development service providers, publicly and privately funded, to meet the child care and development needs of local families.

Objectives under this goal call for the convening of First 5 LA, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and various County departments for the purpose of developing strategies to improve outreach, access, and enrollment in child care and development services for low-income families. This meeting and the related report have been delayed as there was uncertainty regarding ongoing funding for First 5 Commissions and other services.

While funding for First 5 Commissions has been confirmed, there is still great uncertainty on the State Budget. The convening of stakeholders will take place following adoption of the State Budget.